

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 05879

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR, LY, UR
SUBJECT: SOVIET-LIBYAN RELATIONS

REF: (A) TRIPOLI 447, (B) 77 MOSCOW 646 (NOTAL),
(C) MOSCOW 2584 (NOTAL)

SUMMARY: PROVOCATIVE, CRITICAL COMMENTS ON LIBYAN
INTERNAL SCENE BY SOVIET DIPLOMAT IN TRIPOLI (REF A) SEEM
TO RUN COUNTER TO PRESENT SOVIET LINE AND THUS ARE DIFFI-
CULT TO INTERPRET. END SUMMARY.

1. REF A REPORTS SOVIET DIPLOMAT'S VIEWS ON INTERNAL
LIBYAN SITUATION WHICH ARE CRITICAL OF QADHAFI AND HIS
RECENT POLICIES. SOVIETS ARE USUALLY RELUCTANT TO EXPRESS
CRITICISM OF QADHAFI, BUT WHEN PRESSED WILL DO SO. FOR
AN EXAMPLE OF SUCH CAREFUL CRITICISM SEE 77 MOSCOW 646
(REF B).

2. SOVIET-LIBYAN COMMUNIQUE ON RECENT VISIT OF MAJOR
JALLUD PROVIDED NUMEROUS EXAMPLES OF CONTINUING SOVIET-
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LIBYAN POLITICAL DIFFERENCES OVER FOREIGN POLICY ISSUES
SUCH AS M.E. AND HORN, BUT WE HAVE NO EVIDENCE INDICATING
THAT THESE DIFFERENCES CREATED MORE DIFFICULTIES THAN
USUAL DURING THE TALKS THEMSELVES (REF C). INDEED,
MOSCOW SEEMED INTENT ON PAPERING OVER THESE DIFFERENCES
IN ORDER TO PATCH TOGETHER A FACADE OF SOVIET-ARAB SOLI-
DARITY IN THE WAKE OF SADAT'S INITIATIVES TOWARD ISRAEL.

AFTER QADHAFI'S VISIT TO MOSCOW IN DECEMBER 1976, OUR SOVIET WORKING LEVEL CONTACTS DELIBERATELY SIGNALLED US THAT THOSE TALKS WERE "VERY, VERY DIFFICULT," IN OTHER WORDS, THAT MOSCOW WAS TRYING TO BRING QADHAFI AROUND TO A MORE MODERATE POSITION WITH REGARD TO A MIDDLE EAST PEACE SETTLEMENT. THIS MAY WELL HAVE BEEN TRUE AT THAT PARTICULAR TIME.

3. IN AN OTHERWISE TOTALLY NON-PRODUCTIVE BRIEFING ON THE JALLUD VISIT GIVEN AN EMBOFF ON MARCH 17 BY VLADIMIR PAVLOVICH GORELOV, SECOND SECRETARY (ALGERIA), N.E. COUNTRIES DEPT., MFA, THE LATTER SAID THAT THE TALKS WITH JALLUD WERE "EASIER" THAN HAD BEEN THOSE WITH QADHAFI. THE SITUATION HAD CHANGED, HE REMARKED, AND THE TWO SIDES HAD NOT WASTED TIME TALKING ABOUT THOSE ISSUES WHICH DIVIDED THEM. HE SPECIFICALLY AND REPEATEDLY DENIED, FOR EXAMPLE, THAT THE ISSUE OF ERITREA HAD BEEN DISCUSSED DURING THE TALKS. WHETHER THIS IS TRUE OR NOT, THE IMPORTANT THING IS AGAIN THE INTERPRETATION WHICH THE MFA TRIED TO PUT ON THE VISIT, I.E., MOSCOW WAS INTENT ON STRENGTHENING UNITY AMONG THOSE ARAB COUNTRIES (AND THE PLO) WHICH WERE OPPOSED TO SADAT'S RECENT POLICY MOVES.

4. ARAB DIPLOMATS IN MOSCOW DID SPECULATE THAT QADHAFI'S PERSONAL DIFFERENCES WITH MOSCOW WERE ONE OF THE REASONS THAT JALLUD WAS RECENTLY SENT HERE IN HIS PLACE, BUT
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WE WERE NOT ABLE TO FIND ANY EVIDENCE OR EVEN ANY NON-ARAB OPINION HERE WHICH WOULD SUPPORT THAT IDEA.

5. WE REMAIN A BIT PERPLEXED BY SULTANOV'S COMMENTS SINCE HIS EXPRESSION OF CRITICAL VIEWS IS AT ODDS WITH MOSCOW'S CURRENT LINE. HIS VIEWS MAY REFLECT BEHIND THE SCENES SOVIET KNOWLEDGE AND ASSESSMENT OF WHICH WE ARE UNAWARE. ALTERNATIVELY (AND MORE LIKELY) HE MAY HAVE USED A DELIBERATELY PROVOCATIVE APPROACH TO ATTEMPT TO DRAW OUT U.S. VIEWS. TOON

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